

pacity; while her mother, however bright,
active, and thrifty,
was not the woman to give unimpeachable
advice on intricate
legal questions. As for little Smile, now
seven years old,
he did not even know his letters; he spent
happy, careless
days in the sunshine, blissfully ignorant that
trouble was
assailing the home, and would some day
destroy it. Yet
it was he who, long years afterwards, avenged
his father and
his mother, in the only manner possibly in
which they
could be avenged. Perhaps it did not affect
the despoilers
personally; many of them, indeed, must have
been dead at
the time, and those who survived may have
only sneered,
for the gold was theirs. None the less the
pictures of Aix
and its society, traced in four or five volumes of
the Eougon-
Macquart novels, were instinct with
retribution. Aix still
raises ineffectual protests whenever it hears
that name of
Plassans which the novelist gave it, and
which, though its
origin was simple enough, — for it was merely a
modification
of Flassans, the name of a village near
Brignoles, southeast
of Aix,— acquired under Zola's caustic pen an
element of
opprobrium.

The displeasure of Aix in this respect has
been the more
marked as the city's past is not destitute of
grandeur. One
of the earliest stations of the Eomans in Gaul,
it became the

metropolis of the Second Narbonensis; but its walls, porticoes, thermae, arena, and temples were largely destroyed when the Saracens sacked it in the eighth century, and few memorials of its classic era now exist. As the capital of Provence in the days of "good King Eeen6," whose court was described by Scott in "Anne of Geierstein," Aix regained some lustre, followed half a century later by a period of trouble, many of its mediaeval monuments being wrecked